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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [CO](#) [FARC](#)

SUBJECT: SWIFT RESPONSE REPELS FARC ATTACK ON TORIBIO, CAUCA  
DEPARTMENT

1. Summary: GOC forces repelled an attack by 300-400 members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on the town of Toribio, Cauca Department. The early morning attack on April 14 was repelled initially by the 82-man Municipal Police detachment that had been armed and equipped with USG support. The GOC's rapid response and ability to reinforce the police garrison by air prevented the FARC from over-running the town. End summary.

2. On April 14, 2005, approximately 300-400 members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) attacked the town of Toribio, (Cauca Department). Two police and one civilian were killed in the initial assault, while six police and 27 civilians were wounded. The FARC apparently used pre-positioned weapons and explosives, including gas cylinders, to launch their dawn attack. The local police station, which was one of the municipal stations reinforced and equipped through the Embassy's Police Re-establishment in Conflicted Zones program, was an apparent target. The police garrison immediately contacted Colombian National Police (CNP) headquarters in Bogota. The CNP and the Colombian Air Force (COLAF) reacted swiftly, dispatching aircraft and reinforcements to the town.

3. After the initial assault, FARC guerrillas, including snipers, took up positions in farmhouses, a school, and the local hospital -- targets upon which the COLAF's AC-47 gunship and the CNP's UH-60 gun-ships could not fire. The COLAF also flew in a company from the Colombian Army's (COLAR) Third Brigade and the CNP flew in a Carabinero Mobile Squadron police and Antinarcotics Police (DIRAN) Jungla Commandos. CNP Director General Castro arrived in Toribio later in the day to direct the counterattack that ultimately drove the FARC from the town.

4. President Uribe visited Toribio the following day and criticized the FARC's killing of civilians and use civilian sites, such as the town's hospital, as shields from which they continued their attack. The FARC harassed Toribio again on April 17, causing several more civilian, army and police deaths and injuries.

5. CNP Director General Castro and other CNP officials personally conveyed their thanks to the USG for US assistance provided both before and during the attack. The fortification of the municipal police station and armaments and equipment provided to the Toribio detachment enabled the force to withstand the initial assault until reinforcements arrived. Those reinforcements included USG-trained Carabineros and Antinarcotics Police Airmobile Special Forces (Junglas) who were transported on CNP aircraft supported by INL and flown by USG-trained pilots.

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